(v) Extension Services : The Institute has established a Regional Centre in Chennai and Regional Chapters at Secunderabad and Calcutta which arc engaged in activities like Vocational Training, Placement, Community Based Rehabilitation Short-term Training Programme and Library Services.

(vi) Research : The Institute is also engaged in research activities in the field of Psycho-social and educational aspects of visual disability, Development of contradictions and abbreviations in different languages, Development of Braille Shorthand system in different Indian languages and Developments of Prototypes for Assistive Devices.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Yes, Sir. NIVH is already conducting camps outside Dchradun.

(e) Docs not arise.

(0 The activities of the Institute in the fields of Education, Vocational Training, provision of Assistive Devices, Employment, Counselling and Guidance, Library Services and Braille/Talking Books will help the visually handicapped to be self-reliant and in bringing them in the mainstream.

Comprehensive Pension Policy for Older Persons

377. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for comprehensive pension scheme for the older persons is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any survey has been conducted to assess the number of older persons;

(d) if so, what is the total number of such persons in Andhra Pradesh; and

(e) whether the scheme will be fully funded by the Union Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment had commissioned, in August, 1998, a project OASIS (an acronym of Old Age Social & Income Security) to examine policy questions connected with old age income security

in India and submit its recommendations to the Government. The Committee, headed by Dr. S.A. Dave, former Chairman of Unit Trust of India, submitted its final report to the Government on 11.1.2000. The Report contains recommendations on the schemes and action that Government may take to ensure that every young worker bu.,ds up enough savings during his/her working life which could serve as a shield against poverty during their old age. The recommendations contained in the report have a twin focus on further improving existing pension provisions and to devise a fresh pension plan for such workers who are not included in the present pension provisions but are capable of saving modest amounts and converting these savings into Old Age Income Security provision.

(c) and (d) No survey has been conducted as such to assess the number of Older Persons. However, according to 1991 Census, the number of Older Persons (aged 60+) in Andhra Pradesh was 45,10,929.

(e) The new pension system, recommended by Dave Committee, envisages saving by a individual worker and its accumulation into his account throughout his working life. Therefore, the Question of funding the Scheme, if implemented, by the Union Government does not arise.

Welfare Schemes Implemented Through Voluntary Organisation

378. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to slate:

(a) the details of the welfare schemes being carried out in States through the voluntary organisations/NGOs; and

(b) the number of organisations which have taken grants from the Central Government during the last three years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The details of welfare schemes funded by the Ministry being carried out in States through the voluntary organisations/NGOs arc indicated below:—

1. Promote Voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities
2. Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase of Aids/Appliances
3. Prevention of Alcohalism & Substance (Drugs) Abuse
4. Grant-in-aid Programme for Assistance in the field of Social Defence
5. Integrated Programme for Older Person